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Tattooing and the Symbols Tattooed

The large uncarved wooden crosses in most of the graveyards of Dukagini and Pulati (Fig. 9) show at the ends of the arms either (1) a sun and crescent, (2) a sun alone, or (3) a sun with two notches below it—a transition form in which the carpenter has forgotten what the crescent is and merely chopped notches. The sun-wheel forms the back and the crescent and sun the ends of the arms of the typical wooden arm-chair in which the house-lord sits. Such chairs were used by all the tribes, but are now chiefly found in the further Dukagini tribes. The chip-carved distaffs of the women show the cross frequently; but chip-carving does not lend itself to curves, and the moon appears as an angle on which the cross stands. Some distaffs, however, suggest that their complicated designs are based on rayed curves, though they are now angular.

The cross and rayed sun are also traceable on many of the elaborately knitted socks. Here, owing to the exigencies of the material, the sun is square, but the rays are duly shown.

A rayed sun is part of the elaborate design embroidered on the scarlet cloak of the married Catholic women of Scutari. Of this design, which with variations consists always of similar elements, I have failed to find an explanation. "It must be some old story which we have forgotten," say the embroiderers, who are always men. The sun, an ear of wheat (? feather), a flowering plant, the dove and the serpent always appear. It is given to the bride by the bridegroom on her wedding-day. The sun, the wheat, and the flowers suggest fertility. And the facts that the serpent and dove were symbols of the mother goddess worshipped at Knossos, and that bird and serpent played an important part in Egyptian mythology, show that the origin of this Albanian pattern is, indeed, so old that it is no wonder the embroiderers have forgotten it (Figs. 10 and 11).

The sun and moon were firmly established as symbols in the Balkans long before the Turk arrived. I think that probably the Turkish crescent and star is really the rayed sun and moon, the sun being diminished so as to fit decoratively within the crescent.

On the wall of a house at Vuthaj, when the district was wholly Moslem and almost closed to outsiders, I saw, in 1908, a large rayed sun painted with a slim crescent beside it (Fig. 12, No. 10). More striking yet was the emblem at that time placed over the gate of the Turkish Konak at Prizren. It was a large wooden sun with long rays of unequal length. At the tip of each ray was a small wooden crescent. At this time there was huge excitement over the proclamation of the Turkish Constitution, and I was warned neither to draw nor photograph anything in public. I made, therefore, only a memory sketch (Fig. 12, No. 9), but it gives a correct idea of this curious sign, which, as the

[Text continues on p. 129]

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of the shortage of women. This, I believe, is largely caused by the high rate of mortality in childbirth and the extremely hard lives of the women.

A girl, once betrothed, is the property of the family which has bought her, and must be *intacta virgo* when handed over. The most important object of marriage is to obtain sons. A sonless man had no one to avenge him, and his soul would never rest. Therefore in old days, when a girl was handed over, it was usual that the couple should cohabit, but no marriage ceremony should take place till a son was born. The Church has actively fought this custom and almost abolished it. But some cases still occur. Even when the unfortunate woman bore several daughters she might still be treated as worthless; and a married woman who has borne only daughters and is left as a widow has not the right to stay in the family house, but may be permitted to do so. If this is not allowed, her own nearest male relative has the right to sell her again—cheap. I heard of a nephew who had sold his aunt twice.

In a report on the missionary work in Albania made by the Franciscan father Donato Maria di Trento in 1740, he states that the priests are doing all they can to prevent parents from allowing the betrothed to cohabit before marriage, which custom, he says, is universal, and describes as "a most foul torrent of universal concubinage." "They will not contract marriage till offspring is obtained."

Girls being thus married without any choice of their own, and being miserable in strange surroundings, were naturally apt to run away. In the above report this is constantly mentioned as cause of great trouble and feud. Thus Padre Candido reports from Gruda, January 31, 1740: "Women are running away every day, even after marriage." And P. Bonaventura says: "The women are running away *a grandissima furia*."

The custom of child betrothal and payment of parents is described and signed by thirteen padres and the Bishop of Scutari in 1731, and it is stated that it is great disgrace for the betrothed to see each other before they cohabit, or for the bride even to speak with the relatives of the bridegroom. The two parties are never consulted, and "in this country the youth never make love."

To counteract these difficulties the Mission makes much use of the local custom of swearing a common oath in which those swearing it call down all kinds of imprecations on their heads should they be forsworn. Consequent upon the swearing of many such oaths the Mission reports sixty-four marriages celebrated either before or immediately after cohabitation. P. Bonaventura triumphantly states that thirteen married by him are still with their husbands; but of those

585 married by P. Francesco one ran away six weeks ago and cannot be found.

584 When I was there in 1908 things were better, but old customs clung. The main idea of the clergy was to insist that a betrothal must not be broken off, but to prohibit child betrothals.

583 All priests were ordered to question the girl as to her wishes before
585 celebrating the marriage. Few girls, however, have the courage to resist the commands of the house and the usage of the tribe. Among the wilder tribes girls who objected were still sometimes carried off bound with cords and forced to comply; and, cohabitation having taken place, the priest married them.

581 Among the Dukagini tribes infant betrothal was still common.
584 The fine old bairaktar of Nikaj, Bash Bairimi, told me that he thanked God he owed no one blood; all his five sons were alive and four were married. The fifth, aged twenty-five, was yet unmarried. Not because Bash grudged the money. He would pay willingly, but could find no maiden good enough. He wanted good blood. A woman of bad stock makes endless trouble. He had betrothed the four elder lads to unborn brides; but had not done this with the fifth and was sorry, for all good maidens were already betrothed. He was looking out for a suitable widow. Money, he repeated, was no object; he would not stick at a few more napoleons to buy a really suitable woman.

583 A result of high bride-price and shortage of women was a good deal of woman-stealing between the outlying tribes. I was told that many of the blood-feuds of Shala were based upon the abduction of girls from neighbour tribes. If a betrothed girl went off with another man, willingly or unwillingly, a blood-feud always started. She was the property of the family that had bought her and had no rights over her person.

584 *Escape from Betrothal.*—In one way only could a girl evade a marriage
589 she disliked. If she could find twelve elders of her tribe group to act as con-jurors she could swear perpetual virginity. If she broke the vow the honour of the con-jurors was blackened and a blood-feud ensued. It was not easy for her to find twelve con-jurors.

689 Having succeeded and taken the vow in the church or mosque, her
626 status is, I believe, unique. In the Maltsia e Madhe she can, if she pleases, dress as a man. She associates with the men on equal terms,
689 and eats and smokes with them. She may carry arms. The reason given
562 is that as she has no man to support her she must support herself,
939 and a herdsman's life is the only way. I met altogether four virgins who wore men's clothes, but none carried arms. I heard of three more. One in the Djakova district was said to have served in the Turkish Army undetected.

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Birth, Marriage, and Death

Among the Dukagini I met several virgins, but all wore women's dress. As a rule, in all districts, the sworn virgin became servant to one of the priests, and often joined the Third Order of St. Francis. Some became nuns or worked in one of the Scutari nunneries.

In the Maltsia e Madhe, in the case of a man with several daughters and no son, by his wish one could swear virginity and act as his son. He could bequeath to her his house and land for her lifetime, after which it reverted to the nearest male heir. Such a virgin had the right to sell her younger sisters. Such an one, aged about forty, I met in the Hoti tribe (Plate VIII).

In the Dukagini tribes, where the virgins do not wear men's dress, they cannot inherit and live on and work the land during their lifetime as in Maltsia e Madhe. The land goes to the next male heir, and he must pay the virgin yearly 300 okos of maize, 18 of rakija, and 30 of wine, and she can enforce payment by appeal to the Council of Elders.

One case only did I hear of a virgin breaking her vow. She had been for years servant to the priest of Baitza, and was accounted holy. On his death she was forty, and shocked the country-side by eloping with a Gusinje Moslem. No one dared follow to take vengeance in such a dangerous district, but it was piously hoped that she would pay the price of her crime in hell.

On the way from Berisha to Apripa we passed a huge rock. A virgin so holy that she was almost a saint, had vowed to carry it to the church at Berisha. She carried it safely a long way. Then in the forest she heard a shepherd fluting, and looked at him and admired him. Straightway she forgot the heavenly things on which she had fixed her mind; she dropped the rock, and when she tried to pick it up again found she had lost her miraculous strength. And there the rock stands.

In spite of many inquiries, I failed to hear of a case of a young man refusing to marry his betrothed bride. People were surprised I should ask and always replied: "But why should he? God has made all women alike." On the other hand, I met some cases of blind fury ending in blood-feud where a father had broken faith and sold his betrothed daughter to someone else. I argued with one man who was "in blood" that it was stupid to want to marry a girl he had never seen and who did not want him—people in other lands would laugh at him. He furiously replied that the girl had been paid for years ago by his father; the return of the bride-price made no difference; she was their property, and he would get her if he had to shoot her husband to do so. His honour and that of his whole house had been blackened. If people in other lands laughed at him it only showed they had no honour.

I asked often why the young men did not choose for themselves,

583
577 and ask the girl. The usual answer was that they were too modest. The suggestion seemed to be thought indecent.

581 The fact that both in Montenegro and Albania a word of Turkish
152 origin is used commonly for "to make love" (Montenegrin and Bosnian, "ashikovati"; Albanian, "ashik," lover—"ashari," love) suggests that love-making played little or no part in the marriages of both lands. I heard that the son of an Austrian mother and an Albanian father was betrothed and asked his mother if he was much in love. "O dear, no!" she cried. "Not in the least; he is quite Albanian!"

183 One case only I met in which—perhaps for the first time—a betrothal
583 was broken and the girl left free to marry. She was the niece of Mgr. Premi Dochi, mitred abbot of the Mirdites, a very remarkable man, whose death during the war was an immense loss to Albania.

I passed the night at her father's house. The girl sat sullen and glowering in a corner like a wild cat at bay. No one spoke to her. I asked what was the matter. She had refused to be sent to her betrothed. Her father was furious. Only the abbot's intervention had saved her. He talked the young man into admitting that it was useless to marry a girl who hated him and would probably run away, when another more amenable could be found, and got him to swear that no blood-
581 vengeance should be taken if the girl married another. But the father, enraged, declared often and loudly, "A girl marries to please her house and not for herself"; and rated her till I was sorry I had asked. Awe of the abbot alone had made him yield.

585 *Marriage Ceremonies.*—When the wedding-day is fixed the male relatives of the bridegroom go to fetch the bride. The bridegroom usually does not go. As the tribes are exogamous the distance may be considerable. Sometimes the men of the bride's family take her to a spot half-way and hand her over there. Sometimes she is fetched from her father's house. Moslem girls are always accompanied by one or two female relatives. Christian girls usually are, if the journey is a long one; but not always. In no case does the mother go.

Marriage among the Christians is according to the rites of the Catholic Church.

I was never at a mountain wedding, but was told some local ceremonies. In Klementi the bride, on coming to her husband's home, must throw an apple over the roof, and is given some corn. This recalls the confarreatio of the Romans. She is then led three times round the hearth. All through the mountains I gathered that a bride must enter the house with her right foot first and carry in a male child with her. On marriage the hair of the woman is dyed black and dressed differently from that of a virgin. There are various modes, according to district. In the Maltsia e Madhe the head is shaved in front and over the temples,

Birth, Marriage, and Death

and a fringe is made of hair combed forward over the shaven area. 585 ●
The shaven temple makes the face look very wide.

In order to promote fertility, among the Dukagini it was not [842]
uncommon to keep a pair of goats or sheep penned in the corner of the living-room, even when it was at the top of a tall tower and some twenty people lived in it.

On marriage, no kind of privacy is observed. Bride and bridegroom [592]
take their place in the common apartment.

A colossal feast is usual at a wedding, and in the old days it might last several days. A Djakovan friend told me that three oxen, fifteen sheep, and God knows how many fowls had been eaten at his. At all weddings any amount of firing takes place. The tribesman goes on shooting so long as he has a cartridge left, for sheer joy of the "pop-bang." One man I knew fired his whole stock of six hundred cartridges.

Weddings in the Towns.—In Scutari I was guest at two Catholic weddings. The bridegroom saw the bride for the first time in church. She was brought in closely veiled and unveiled only before the altar. Weddings were always on a Monday or Saturday—usually a Monday. "It would be most inconvenient to marry on any other day," was the sole explanation findable.

This is what took place: The marriage had been arranged by the 584
relatives on each side after long conferences. On Sunday afternoon I was invited to the bridegroom's house to see the "gifts." No bride- 583
price in money is paid. Four Scutari ladies in full dress sat on the floor 585
at one end of the room and three men at the other, in charge of the "gifts." These were always the same, and varied only in quality according to the bridegroom's means. The "gifts" were a pair of boots, a pair of slippers, and four boxes of scented soap (or perfume), which were [291]
in charge of the men. The ladies watched over a large red silk hand-
kerchief, a pair of white cotton stockings (with pink suspenders sewn on a card, a greatly admired novelty), a pair of scissors, needles and pins in a casket, a distaff to make her a good housewife, and a handsome [301]
necklace of large silver-gilt coins, set in filigree. This is called the "dupa." It is worn by all married women, and is sometimes of gold and very valuable. No doubt it represents the bride-price.

The boots had high gilt heels, yellow uppers, pink elastic sides, [291]
and patent-leather toes, embroidered minutely with wreaths of flowers. They were filled with sweetly scented flowers, that the bride's path on earth might be sweet. We admired the gifts and awaited the arrival of the relative who was to take them to the bride. He arrived with several others; and they dragged from another room the bridegroom, who resisted strongly because "he was so shy." Bride and bridegroom [576]
have to assume a superhuman modesty.

585 The presents were tied up in two gaily coloured handkerchiefs. We went into the yard. The ladies joined hands and so did the men, and [533] stood in opposite rows singing alternate verses. The men asked if the bride was ready, and the ladies sang she was a lump of sugar. The youth who was acting as gift-carrier was then sprinkled with holy water by the mistress of the house, and went on his errand. All was over for that day. On Monday, at 9 a.m., we were called to the bridegroom's house. [534] A large party of male relatives and friends was gathered there, with a violin, tambouritza, and concertina. The bridegroom and his two witnesses sat in the yard on chairs. I went to the women's room. The [282 301] display was gorgeous. On full-dress occasions the Scutarene Catholic ladies' dress touches the sublime. The exquisite fineness of the embroidered white silk veils, the skill with which they were draped; the coral and gold stitched "salman" which gleamed through the veil and stood in a peak over the forehead; the long tassels of seed-pearls or filigree gold that hung from the ears; the lavish display on neck and breast of great gold coins, and the great scarlet cloaks made up a scene of real magnificence. Each lady sat, a vast heap, on the floor, her huge purple-black "branaveks" (bloomers) billowing round her and the skirts of her scarlet stiffly embroidered "djuba" spreading like a peacock's tail behind her, with all the solemn dignity of an Eastern [262] idol. Coffee and piles of sweets circulated. An empty chair in the corner awaited the bride. Then an ox-cart creaked down the lane. The oxen were decked with marigolds. They brought the bride's coffer. We went to meet it. The women joined hands and sang a song of greeting, while with difficulty ten men carried the huge painted chest into the women's room. It contained all the bride's clothing; all her husband's underclothing (she has to make him at least two dozen of everything); and all the house-linen (likewise her work). Two of the bridegroom's female relatives now went in a gaily decorated carriage to fetch the bride. The horses' heads were beflagged with the coloured handker- [281] chiefs which play a large part in the life of the people. The ladies took with them a parasol for the bride and the scarlet cloak ("japangi"), which is the gift always of the bridegroom to the bride, and is worn by married women only. The bride was to be conveyed to the cathedral.

The bridegroom then entered the women's room to say farewell. [777] He wept real tears and was dragged away weeping and resisting, the ladies sprinkling him with holy water as he left. After a long wait, punctuated with coffee, sweets, and rakia, a cry arose: "They are coming!" In the carriage were the two female bride-leaders, neither of whom may be the mother. A sister, aunt, or sister-in-law may take [777 842] the duty. Between them sat the bride motionless, rigid, and closely veiled; and opposite sat a little boy whose presence is necessary to

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enable her to bear male children. The ladies again sang songs of greeting. Then the two bride-leaders manipulated the bride as though she were a lay figure. She was absolutely passive. They raised her to her feet, set her feet one after the other, shod in the wedding-boots, on to the steps of the carriage, and then on the ground. They then draped her with the red silk handkerchief sent her yesterday, and pinned it to the top of her head. Supported under the armpits she was slowly shuffled across the yard. It was but a few yards long, but her passage took full ten minutes. She was pelted with sweets, which a crowd of children gathered, and sprinkled with holy water, and led into the women's room. The bridegroom then arrived on foot and went to the men's room. I followed the bride. She was led backwards, and seated, still blinded by the veils, upon the chair in the corner. Her hands were laid on her sash and nervously grasped a folded handkerchief. Her immobility as her attendants handled her was so inhuman as to be almost horrible. One of her leaders carefully lifted a corner of her head-coverings and gave her lemonade to drink under it. The attendants themselves were then ceremoniously served with refreshments. They then removed her wedding-boots and put on the slippers, raised her to her feet, lifted a corner of her veil, said good-bye under it, and withdrew. The poor bride still stirred never a finger, but the violent heaving of her breast showed her on the verge of hysterics. She pulled herself together and the ordeal continued. One of the bridegroom's female relatives unpinned the red handkerchief from the bride's head and held it as a screen before her. Behind it her headdress was changed. Her white veil was removed, and a yellow beflowered silk one substituted.

The great moment had now come. We were to see her face. A lady on each side of her threw back the veil and showed her off. She was exposed to a crowd of staring females. Her head dropped modestly. Her attendants each placed a finger under her chin and raised it again. The sweat streamed down her face. They wiped it. They straightened her wide coat, settled her sash, and waved the flies off her. Such was her Spartan heroism that when a fly, unobserved by the attendants, crawled up her face, she did not even by a twitch show that she was alive. Then a front row of chairs was arranged and all the men came in. The bridegroom, witnesses, and father took their seats. The background was crowded with miscellaneous youths. They stared with all their eyes at the luckless girl, who in vain dropped or turned her head, only to have it put straight again.

Only the bridegroom held his head down and would not look. His witnesses grasped his chin and made him look, and he faltered, "But I've seen her already."

The wedding song then began:—

533
585 How beautiful is the bride, Mashallah, Mashallah.
She has a forehead for a "perishan" (gold ornament of coins, etc.).
Her eyebrows are like braid, Mashallah, etc.
Her eyes large as coffee cups, Mashallah, etc.
Her nose is like a gold coin ("muskala").
Her cheeks like sweet cake ("gurabi," given at night by the bride to the bridegroom).
Her mouth is like a casket, Mashallah, etc.
Her teeth like pearls.
Her neck like a lily. Her figure is like a standard

585 sang the ladies, the men roaring: "She is, she is!" in a high falsetto, pressing their hands on their ears, and the small boys yelling "Mashallah," a strange cry at a Catholic wedding. All the time her two attendants
[152] patted, straightened, and wiped the bride. My neighbour whispered to me: "They often faint." I anxiously watched her panting and swaying, and was relieved when the bridegroom left the room and the men followed. The ladies then bent the bride's knees and she plopped on to the chair. By now she was almost hypnotized, and mechanically at intervals tried to rise, but was at once replaced unless a child came in, when it was correct for her to rise for a moment. Then came midday and the wedding dinner, to which I did not stay. The bride is allowed to withdraw for a time. She does not eat with the guests. Her attendants
[264] put little bits of food into her mouth. If very modest she does not take it, but when left alone secretly consumes some food she has hidden in her marriage coffer. On my return she was again enthroned. I was given three tumblers of wine and a dish of sweets and told to consume them, and did my best. I was then given a special view of all the bride's ornaments, and invited to return at night for the final ceremony. This I did not do. It was described as follows: The two attendants prepare the bed at midnight. They undress the bride and put a long silk shirt on her; lay her forcibly on the bed, and withdraw. The two male
[833 witnesses then lead or drag in the bridegroom and prepare him. The
533] wedding guests all stand outside the door when the couple are left alone, and sing epithalamia of an encouraging nature and shout advice through the keyhole. The bride has to feed the bridegroom with the "gurabi" (cake) she has brought in her wedding coffer.

The company sings continually till told the marriage has been consummated. In a short time the bride and bridegroom emerge completely redressed. She wears a married woman's dress. They are greeted as man and wife and at last left in peace.

585 The whole of the next week the bride may be visited at any hour
574 of the day and must not speak a word, but sit rigid as before.

At the end of the week she has a holiday and goes back to her own people on the Sunday. On the Wednesday her husband is invited to

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make acquaintance with the family into which he has married. Again 585
the party is divided into "buck-herds and doe-herds." The husband 574
enters the ladies' room and embraces all of his new female relations,
except his wife, whom modesty compels to turn away. He sups with [576]
the family and goes home alone. Next day the bride is brought back
to his house and the same pantomime of extreme reluctance is gone
through. She comes home usually in a carriage. I was told that formerly
it was etiquette for her to come on foot, but only inch by inch, so that
her return from a house round the corner might perhaps take hours.
She visits her family thus at week-ends for several months, but only
on the first occasion is a carriage and ceremony necessary.

A bridegroom, while I was in Scutari, revolted against the midnight
ceremony, and turned all the guests out of his house after the feast.
In spite of her assumed modesty the bride was deeply hurt at being
thus deprived of publicity. She complained to her parents, who angrily
asked why their daughter should have been thus insulted. Was she
not good enough to show as his wife to his friends in the usual manner?
Nor could they see that in this case the bridegroom's modesty had
been real and not assumed.

He was in the unusual position of having a house of his own. In most 591
cases the young couple lives in the house of the bridegroom's parents 592
in the town and has a separate room. The parents rule and control
the household, and the bride is often very hard-worked. The emigrants
returned from America have brought new ideas and the system is
breaking down.

Much of the above ceremony resembles Roman practice. The distaff,
the casket of household implements, the throwing of sweets, sprinkling
of water, epithalamia, the *patria potestas* also.

The girls of a family must be married according to age—the eldest 582
first, and so on. The origin of this is perhaps that formerly infant
betrothals were almost universal and girls were sent to their husbands
so soon as old enough.

In Scutari, and, I believe, in the other towns, the daughters, or at
least one of them, must be married before the sons can be married.
The explanation offered was that the daughters must be dowered,
and the sons cannot marry till they have helped earn the dowries.
Over these wedding outfits the parties are very exacting. The bride- 583
groom's family bargains for every stitch of the garments and stipulates
as to their quality. While I was in Scutari a betrothed man, who had
always worn Albanian costume, went to work abroad and dressed
à la Franga. He wrote home to say he now required drawers that
could be worn under trousers, and his fiancée, who had already finished
I forget how many dozen voluminous Albanian garments, had all her

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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holding each other with one hand while they execute a step composed of shuffles and leaps, and not particularly graceful, waving at the same time over their heads a kerchief, or scarf, with their disengaged hand. Another dance of a pantomimic character is sometimes performed at weddings for the amusement of the company. Three masked men, in the characters of a man, his wife, and his servant, perform a burlesque representing the weakness of man and the unfaithfulness of woman. The husband expresses by gesture his despair at seeing his wife make eyes at the wedding guests, while her servant, armed with a broom in lieu of a gun, threatens to shoot her mistress's lovers.

The Albanians are, as M. Dozon remarks,[1] "without literature, without art, and almost without a history." Their language, which is difficult to learn and difficult to pronounce, is a complete mosaic of fragments borrowed from many sources, though a native element naturally predominates. Greek and Turkish words abound, and many of Slav and Latin origin have become part of the vernacular. The language of the Skipetars is also divided between the two dialects spoken respectively by the Tosks and the Ghegs, though there is no well-defined line of demarcation between them. The purest Albanian is said to be spoken at Elbassan, the inhabitants of which according to the native saying:

> "Turk of Stambolhit [Constantinople],
> Skipe of Elbasanit,"

are looked upon as representative Skipetars. The total neglect of the mother tongue has been due in

[1] *Manuel de la Langue Chkipe*, pp. 1 and 163.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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583 certain amount of plenishing, the bridegroom supplying the rest.

585 184 With the exception of the nuptial benediction, the marriage customs of the Christian and Moslem Albanians are similar, and there is very little difference in the songs by which they are accompanied. Among the Moslems the betrothal takes [584] place in the presence of the Kadi. This functionary receives the declaration of mutual consent, made on the part of the maiden by her natural guardians, who undertake to prove it by the mouth of two Moslem witnesses. After a prayer for the benediction of Allah on the union, a contract is drawn up enumerating the articles to be given to the bride by her parents, and stipulating the sum to be paid to her by the husband in the event of his divorcing her. To this document the Kadi and the witnesses affix their seals, and this ceremony constitutes the legal marriage.

As with the Osmanlis, the bride does not, however, go to her husband's house until the wedding festivities have taken place, the interval ranging in duration from a few weeks to a year, according to the convenience of the bridegroom's family. As the ceremonies observed in Epirus present so many points of similarity with those of the Greeks,[1] I will here describe only those belonging to Upper Albania which present features peculiar to themselves.

The festivities invariably begin on a Thursday with the sending of the *dunti* by the bridegroom. This is the decorated box containing the presents to the bride of various articles of dress and ornament,

[1] Vol. i. chap. iii.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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including boots and shoes of yellow leather embroidered with gold, together with a loaf of sugar, some coffee, and other customary trifles. The *dunti* is carried by two boys belonging to the bridegroom's family, both of whose parents must be living. As they arrive at the house the women and girls sing a song beginning :

> O flaxen one, far whiter
> Than foam on Drin's wave-crest,
> —— sends to thee the *dunti*,
> All in a golden chest.

All the members of the family receive the boys at the foot of the staircase with every mark of respect, and conduct them to the reception-room. As the *dunti* is placed on a coffer, all present cry, "*Per heir*" (Good luck !) The envoys are seated in the place of honour, while all the family of the bride remain standing; refreshments, consisting of liqueurs and bonbons, are served twice, complimentary speeches are exchanged, and after about an hour of polite attentions, the boys depart. On the same day a youth is despatched by the bridegroom's parents to invite the guests for the following Monday. The formula he makes use of is—"So-and-so is to be married, and begs you to come next Monday to the wedding with all your family, or, if you prefer it, let the head of the family come alone." At each house he receives in return for his invitation a present of a few piastres. The number of persons invited by each family is fixed according to the degree of kinship or friendship existing between them and the bridegroom's family.

The bride's family send out their invitations in the

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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585 same way on the Friday. On this day, too, the women assemble to help in the preparations for the ceremony. While some busy themselves with putting finishing touches to the trousseau, or helping in the kitchen, the others take the bride in hand and commence to "busk" her for the occasion. Compelled by custom [302] to submit silently to whatever operation they may, in their zeal to make her as beautiful as possible, subject her, the poor bride is bathed, scrubbed, "massaged," and *dépilée*, her hair and eyebrows are dyed black, and her feet and hands stained red with henna.

On Sunday evening the bride, dressed in her bridal array, and decked in all her ornaments, is presented to the women of the family. If she is of humble station, jewels are borrowed for her to wear for the occasion, so that, on this day at least, she may lack nothing. The work of the women who have dressed her is then freely and openly criticised, no word, however, being uttered which could possibly hurt the feelings of the bride; for, according to the good ladies of Scutari, a bride can never be otherwise than beautiful. Later on the father and brothers enter, and the maiden, throwing herself at their feet, asks their pardon with tears for all the faults she has since her childhood com- [152] mitted. Hardly has the father raised her than a chorus of sobs and cries is heard from all the company, who thus testify their sorrow at the approaching separation of the maiden from her family. When their grief has exhausted itself, they dry their tears and break into a song, which, translated, is as follows:—

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Lower your crests, ye mountains high,
That we may the moon descry
Sailing through the azure sky.
Our bride her mother's counsels heard,
Who said, "My daughter, mark my word,
Love and respect your father new."
"That, mother will I gladly do—
I'll love and honour him alway
Who's given to me a bridegroom gay."

On Monday morning, the homes of both bride and bridegroom are thronged with guests, sometimes to the number of several hundreds. Each one brings an *oka*[1] of coffee and another of sugar for the benefit of the house, and at the same time presents the bride with a gold coin, the value of which varies with the degree of relationship of the giver. These coins are subsequently strung into necklaces, and constitute part of the personal property of a married woman.

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At early dawn the bride is dressed in her wedding finery, decked with all her jewels, and, at sunrise, is led to a corner of the principal reception-room. Here custom requires her to stand, motionless and speechless, with downcast eyes and hands crossed on her breast, until she starts for her new home. Two women, posted at either side, keep watch and ward over her, and the rest of the female guests, seated round the room on the divans, stare at the poor girl as if she were the idol of their worship. At meal-times, on this and the two following days, she eats alone, covered with a veil, though if she is anxious to make a good impression she will partake of food only

[1] About 2¾ lbs. avoirdupois.

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585 if compelled to do so, in order to show how great is her regret at leaving the paternal roof.[1] In fact, her behaviour throughout is intended to typify her reluctance to exchange the single for the married state. Meantime the guests divert themselves with liqueurs, coffee, and sweets, and the performances of the professional musicians hired for the occasion.

262 463

About ten o'clock a cart arrives from the bridegroom's abode to fetch the bride's baggage, which is packed in a large wooden box ornamented with designs of flowers rudely executed. When it starts every one shouts, "*Per heir*" (Good luck!), and among the Christians, several women accompany the cart outside the gate, sprinkling both it and its contents with holy water. A few minutes afterwards, all the male guests invited by the bridegroom's friends set out, preceded by his father, who leads a richly caparisoned horse on which the bride will ride home. As they leave the house the women sing:

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Happy may thy journey be,
Eldest of our family.
Holy sign of cross now make,
To the right thy way then take.
If to us thou bring fair bride,
May the sugar-plums taste sweet,
If a foul one by thy side
That they bitter taste were meet.

585 262 Arrived at their destination, the party range themselves around the courtyard, where glasses of cognac and water, and sweets and sugar-plums of various kinds

[1] The Mongols of Tibet observe a similar custom. See *Journal of Sarat Chandra Das*, published by the Royal Geographical Society.

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are handed round by men-servants. During this ceremony, which every one endeavours to prolong, the bride, enveloped in a long cloak and covered with a veil, is led downstairs. She walks as slowly as possible, supported on either hand by an attendant as if infirm, and is hidden from all eyes by silken draperies held on either side of her path until she has been seated on her horse.

The procession then starts. The husband's guests walk first, then comes the bride, her horse led by a servant, supported on either side by her brothers, behind her follow the musicians and singers, the rear being brought up by her relatives and friends. Various songs are sung *en route*, of which the following may serve as a specimen :—

Our fair bride is on the way,
Like a pink, so fresh and gay.
At the door's our brideling fair,
Like the pink's her perfume rare.
In the courtyard is the bride,
She's a rose that's open'd wide.
On the stair the bride see now,
White as jasmine is her brow.
Now she comes within the room,
Her neck is like the lily's bloom.
"Bride of mine, now cease to grieve,
Let not sobs thy bosom heave."
"Bridegroom mine, can I be gay?
I've my father left to-day.
From my home for ever torn,
It is meet that I should mourn."

The bride, on leaving the door of her childhood's home, and at every street corner she passes, inclines

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585 her head three times in token of farewell to the places she will never again, as a maiden, behold.[1] When her approach is announced to the women of her husband's family, they sing:

[539]

"Bride, lost bride, what wouldst thou find?"
"The courtyard gate of my bridegroom kind."
"What, O bride, wilt thou give to me
If I show now his courtyard gate unto thee?"
"Shirts, O my bridegroom, all broidered and fine."
"Small is thy guerdon, O brideling of mine,
For I can take them, nor ask leave of thine."

Arrived at the bridegroom's home, the same precautions are taken in dismounting the bride as were observed in placing her upon her horse. The women of the house come down to receive her, and pushing her gently, lead her, as if against her will, into the nuptial chamber, where she is seated on cushions. When coffee has been served and partaken of, the bride's friends take their leave, the eldest among them saying in a loud voice:

"Until now she belonged to God and to us, now and henceforward she belongs to you and to God, who will protect her."[2]

As they retire, the last message of the bride to her mother is sung:

[539]

Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay!
A word to you the bride would say.
Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay!

[1] This observance may possibly have its origin in the propitiatory farewells paid by a bride, among the ancient Slavs, to her father's household gods. Compare Kovalevsky, *Modern Customs, &c., of Russia*, pp. 33–4.

[606] [2] This is intended to signify that if the bride is not well treated in her new home her parents will intervene on her behalf.

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My greetings to my mother bear,
My greetings to my sisters fair,
Tell them my heart will love them e'er.
Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay!
Each day, when comes the even glow,
My prayers, on winds that softly blow,
For them to God on high shall go—
Stay, stay, O dearest brothers, stay!

As soon as the bride's relatives have left, the women raise her veil with the silver handle of a dagger, or some other object made of the same metal,[1] and whether she comes up to their expectations or not, they are in duty bound to sing:

How beautiful she is, the bride!
May God preserve her!
Her brow is high and white and wide,
May God preserve her!
Her eyebrows have the rainbow's curve,
May God preserve her!
Her eyes for coffee cups might serve,[2]
May God preserve her!
Her cheeks the rose's inmost fold
May God preserve her!
Her mouth a little box of gold
May God preserve her!
Her lips as red as cherries are
May God preserve her!
Her teeth than pearls are whiter far!
May God preserve her!
Like milk her skin is fair and white
May God preserve her!
Like cypress is she tall and slight
May God preserve her!

Among the Christian Albanians, the religious ceremony is now performed in the nuptial chamber, where

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[1] Magical properties are attributed to this metal by the Albanians.
[2] Literally, "as large as coffee-cups"—*fndjanes*.

[777]

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585 an altar is specially prepared. The nearest relatives of the bridegroom only are present, and he, like the bride, simulates great unwillingness to enter the apartment. The mass performed, the priest asks the bride three times if she accepts the man kneeling at her side for her husband. Custom, however, forbids her to [577] reply, and at the third interrogation the women in attendance force her to bow her head in token of assent. The bridegroom, on the contrary, pronounces his consent in a loud voice. However plain the bride may prove to be, custom forbids that any sign of disgust or annoyance should be manifested. If, however, she be afflicted with any physical deformity, such as lameness, blindness, or a humped back, the husband may claim an indemnity from her parents, or, if he is prepared to abide the consequences of such an insult, may send her back to them.

The ceremony terminated, the bridegroom leaves the room, and the female guests re-enter, extolling in song the graces and virtues with which, according to [562 264] them, every bride is endowed. The feast is then served, the men sitting down by themselves in one room, and the women in another, and the two parties amuse themselves separately for the rest of the evening. An hour before midnight, the women conduct the bride to the nuptial chamber, and, having taken off her bridal finery, cover her face with a veil, and leave her. When the bridegroom enters, he simulates astonishment at finding a maiden there. Lifting the veil from her head, he declares himself to be enraptured with her beauty, and asks her a hundred questions. The bride feigns sleep and pretends not to

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hear him. He offers her sweets which have been left there purposely, but still she heeds him not. This comedy may, if the bridegroom be timid and the bride reserved, be prolonged until the third evening after the marriage, in which case the courage and virtue of the bride are extolled by the women in song. On the third evening, however, custom requires the bride to respond to her husband's advances. On the three days following the wedding the bride, dressed as before, stands like a statue in the reception-room to receive the women visitors who flock to the house in order to inspect her.

The ceremonies attending the nuptials of the mountain people are almost precisely similar to those customary in the towns, with the exception that the bride is not veiled when conducted to her husband's home. A romantic reserve, however, surrounds the interviews between the young couple, who, especially if the husband be one of a numerous family and have no private apartments, can only meet in secret until they have children of their own. The mountaineers cherish this custom, which, they contend, by surrounding with a halo of romance and mystery the relations of the young couple, tends to keep their love for each other fresh and warm. The wedding processions of the Moslems and Christians are only to be distinguished by the more picturesque effect of those of the former. Many of the company, dressed in rich apparel glittering with gold embroidery, accompany the bride on horseback, indulging as they go, whenever they arrive at a spot sufficiently spacious, in the manly old Osmanli game of throwing the *djerid*, or spear. Pistols

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585 184 are fired incessantly, and the strains of wild music echoing from the surrounding hills add to the animation of the scene.

The wedding ceremonies observed in Southern Albania, in so far as they differ from those of the Northern Albanians, resemble very closely the Greek country customs described in the preceding volume.[1]

764 171 The funeral observances of the Albanians also resemble in some degree those of the Greeks. Family ties are equally strong in both races, and the death of a relative is always a source of poignant grief to the

763 survivors. The demonstrations of sorrow are loudest and most heartrending when a man or woman dies in the prime of life. When he is believed to be at the point of death, the women watching round him give utterance to frightfully piercing cries and shrieks, upon hearing which the friends hasten to the house of mourning in order to take part in the death chorus. When the last breath is drawn, all the near female relatives of the deceased who are not past middle age —wife, sisters, sisters-in-law, and daughters—testify their grief by beating their breasts, scratching their faces until the blood flows, and tearing out or cutting off their hair. In their utter abandonment of sorrow they also beat their heads against the walls of the room, calling wildly upon the deceased by his or her name, often exhausting themselves to such a degree as to lose for the time the use of their voices. With the weaker among them these frenzies of sorrow gene-

[1] Chapter iii. An account of these ceremonies may be found in Von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien*, and Dozon, *Contes Albanais*.

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Skiperi would Our Lady of Scutari forgive her children, and return to her ancient shrine.

The scene on this day in the great square building, which, with its bare walls and absence of ornament, bears little resemblance to a Romish church, is most striking and strange. The mass performed on the occasion is listened to by a congregation whose waists are perfect arsenals, bristling with pistols and yataghans of every shape and pattern. There are wild-looking, fierce-moustachioed highlanders, white-kilted Mussulmans, chieftains blazing with gold embroidery, and milder citizens in more homely garb, all assembled in honour of the Madonna, before whose shrine their ancestors had worshipped. Yet, notwithstanding their participation in the religious rites of their neighbours, the Albanians are not less tenacious of their own honour than of that of the creed they profess, any insult offered to a Christian church being promptly retaliated upon a Moslem mosque, and *vice versâ*. Of this the following incident, which occurred about the middle of the century, offers a striking illustration.

A certain Tahir Mala, of Bugna, belonging to the Moslem tribe of the Gascii, having married his son to a maiden of the Christian Schialla, set out to bring the bride home, accompanied, according to national custom, by a numerous train, and preceded by the tribal banners. On the return journey, they stopped, as usual, every now and then to fire volleys into the air. Their way, however, lying past a Christian cemetery, the cross, standing in the midst, offered a mark for their pistols too tempting to be resisted, and was soon

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539 "Your lordship," replied the villager, "knows that I have no one more trustworthy than the young man of whom we spoke."

"Precisely. I had him in my mind. Let him take my horse, and let him come to me for the letter."

The youth took it, mounted the horse, and set out. On the road he was thirsty, and having found a spring, he dismounted from the horse, drank his fill, and lay down to take a nap. While he slept, a negro appeared, took the letter out of his bosom, and wrote another to this effect.

"The man whom I send to thee thou must receive with all honour, prepare for him a magnificent feast, and then marry him to our daughter. At the [585] moment the wedding crowns are placed on their heads[1] let a salute be fired, so that I may hear and take part in the rejoicings."

The letter finished, the negro folded and sealed it as the other had been, and then placed it in the bosom of the youth, who was not long in waking. Unconscious of what had happened, he continued his journey, and delivered the letter forthwith to the Pasha's lady. She had no sooner read it than she began to treat him with great politeness, gave orders for a great feast, and married him to her daughter, while salutes were fired by the gunners. The Pasha, hearing in the village the sound of the guns, concluded that the youth was dead. "At last I have got rid of him," he said to himself. So you may

[1] "Placing the crowns," being a part of the Christian marriage ceremony, is somewhat out of place in the wedding of a Pasha's daughter.

PEAKS OF SHALA

000 583 God. It was not strange that what I had heard of the marriage customs had baffled me, he said; I should not look for traces of marriage by capture or marriage by purchase; the basis of the tribal ceremonies is fire worship.

585 593 On the day of the wedding the bride, elaborately dressed, is carried, screaming and struggling, from her father's house, and by her brothers is delivered to the husband's family at a place midway between the lands of the two [582] tribes. Since each tribe is technically a large [619] family, claiming a common prehistoric ancestor, it is forbidden to marry within the tribe. The bride carries with her from her home one invariable gift—a pair of fire tongs. When she arrives at her husband's house she takes a humble place in the corner, standing, her hands folded on her breast, her eyes downcast, and for three days and nights she is required to remain in that position, without lifting her eyes, without moving, and without eating or drinking.

"Though I believe," said the bishop, smiling, "that she takes the precaution of hiding some food and drink in her garments, and no doubt the mother-in-law sees that she is allowed to rest a little while the household is asleep." And he explained that this custom remains from the old days when the father of each house was also the priestly guardian of the fire, and anyone coming to ask for a light from it stood reverently in that position, silent, before the hearth, until the father priest gave it to him. The bride, new-

1 [Bishop of Pultit -- Analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

comer in the family, is a suppliant for the gift of fire, of life, of the Mystery that continues the race.

On the third day she puts on the heavy belt that means she is a wife, and thereafter she goes about the household, obeying the commands of the elders, always standing until they tell her to sit, and for six months not speaking unless they address her. And it is her duty to care for the fire, and with her fire tongs to light the cigarettes smoked by any of the family, or by their guests. Sometime, when it is convenient, she and her husband will go to the church and be married by the priest. Usually she has not seen her husband until she comes to his house, since she is of another tribe and the marriage is arranged by the families.

"We have tried to prevent the betrothing of children before they are born," said the bishop,[1] smiling ruefully, "and in many centuries we have had some effect. Children now are usually not betrothed until they are two or three years old. Even that we combat, of course, yet I cannot say that the custom makes much unhappiness. Husbands and wives are good comrades; they almost never quarrel and they are devoted to their children. But you will see all that for yourself. Yet occasionally there is something like this Shala-Shoshi affair, which I fear will lead to much bloodshed. But the dinner is ready and my servant will show you your room and bring water to wash your hands."

The servant led us to the bishop's own bed-

[1] [Bishop of Pultit -- Analyst]

It is forbidden to use the church and religion for political purposes. 659

Likewise, political organizations based on religion are also forbidden.

The state may assist religious communities materially.

ARTICLE 17

Marriage and family are protected by the state. The legal conditions of marriage and family are fixed by law. 585

Legal marriages can be performed only by competent representatives of the government. After celebrating a civil marriage a citizen may celebrate a religious marriage according to the rules of his creed.

The courts of the state only are competent to determine all questions concerning marriage. [692]

Parents have the same obligations towards their illegitimate children as to those born in wedlock. Illegitimate children have the same rights as those born in wedlock. [848]

ARTICLE 18

Freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of organization, freedom of assembly and of public demonstration. are guaranteed to all citizens. 641

ARTICLE 19

Personal inviolability is guaranteed to all citizens. Nobody can be arrested for more than three days without a court warrant or without the approval of the district attorney. 671 641 [694]

No person shall be punished for a crime without the decision of a competent judge in conformity with the law which defines the crime and the competence of the court.

No punishment shall be determined and inflicted except as prescribed by law.

No person shall be punished without a hearing nor without being summoned to defend himself according to law, except in a case where his absence is legally established

The administrative organs of the state may give jail sentences for common law misdemeanors as prescribed by law.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EG1 Albania EG1

tree-trunk. A similar section, split lengthways and hollowed out, made two wash-tubs for laundry work. Toilet appliances, a basin and ewer bought in the bazaar, and paraffin lamps from the same source, completed the list of additions.

The above outline omits many small variations in Albanian houses and furniture as irrelevant to the main subject of this book. Mention must be made, however, of certain houses which differed widely from the average type. The first were found among the Highlanders (Alb. *Malësorë*, 'mountaineers'), the semi-nomads who wintered on the soggy plains at the mouth of the river Mat. These houses had walls of planking or wattle and daub, with roofs of tiles or strips of wood. They rested on vertical sections of tree trunks about two feet high which had been laid at close intervals on the ground but had not been driven into it like piles. In this way they kept snug and dry even during the winter floods. All over Albania granaries were raised some distance from the ground in order to keep out the rats, but so far as is known, there were no houses on stilts except at the mouth of the Mat.

A number of Highland houses also contained a child's play-pen which might be as little as twenty-five inches long, wide and high. A shallow porringer projected from one of the top bars, chipped from the same piece of wood as the bar itself. In this pen Highland children spent all their winter days from the time they could crawl until they were three years old. They had no toys, but practised walking round the pen, sometimes stopping to eat a little bread and milk from the porringer with the diminutive home-made, wooden spoon which was tied to the bar, or merely gazing broodingly at the fire. The mothers meanwhile cooked, spun or gossiped, each secure in the knowledge that her child was on the dry floor of the kitchen and not sitting outside in the quagmire of mud that reached up to the very doorstep. The Highlanders said they invented both the houses and the play-pen themselves, but it is possible that they were at least advised by the Austro-Hungarian troops who were stationed in the neighbourhood for part of the war of 1914–18.

In Shpat, near Elbasan, huts were built for many bridegrooms. In the higher villages trunks of young trees about as tall as a man's waist were planted in a rectangle of the size desired, their boughs, while still green and flexible, were laced in and out of these uprights, and cross-pieces of timber were nailed to the uprights

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his household and his visitors. Bridal parties or funeral processions which tried to pass along his path[1] to evade the difficulties of the highway were not so likely as habitual travellers to attempt to create a precedent, but he had the right to turn them back. If they tried to force their way past him he had the right to shoot them. Many a corpse, to quote Father Gjeçov, has found comrades in death before being buried, and many a bride has mourned the loss of a kinsman in her escort on the way to her bridegroom.

If, however, at a time when the highway was impassable, occasional travellers asked a man's leave to use his path he often granted their request. But he always made it clear that the right of passage was temporary and stipulated that his honour was not to be smirched or his property damaged. In Shkrel a man whose field adjoined a road liable to bogging in winter often left enough land in the field for a new road. This he did as alms. Any timber on either side of the new road remained his private property, and could not be cut down by anyone else though he was free to cut it as and when he pleased. He could also close the road at his pleasure; even if the public had used it for years, usage did not create a right and rob a man of his land. Sometimes a village, to suit its convenience rather than to meet its need, asked a man to allow the public to go through his land. He usually agreed, but always stipulated that if any damage was done or he needed to work the land, he should be entitled to close the right-of-way, informing his fellow-villagers that they must not come that way any more. If this became necessary, he was not required to provide an alternative, as a man who moved a public road must do. He had opened the road as a favour, and what was given as a favour could not be retained by force. The option of closing the road descended to his heirs.

The private ownership of a road is seen at its most interesting in the case of a blind alley. This was seldom wide enough to take two persons abreast and had an entrance but no exit. The commonest type led across a man's field from a public thoroughfare to his house, where it came to a dead end. In this case it was his sole property, and if he liked he could plough it up without consulting anybody. Another type served several houses, and was held jointly and equally by these. The common ownership had its drawbacks. Two out of three owners, for instance, might wish to plough up the section passing through their fields. Though this

[1] [i.e. the private path of a man--Analyst]

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This custom of the wife's brother giving a cartridge to a husband who had murdered his erring wife explains the phrase often heard in Albania, 'a bride with a cartridge on her back'. In Martanesh it was an old, but long disused, custom to tie a cartridge on the back of a bride's veil as she left her father's house; this cartridge she was to give to her husband on her wedding night, and he would keep it against the day when he found her unfaithful and then kill her with it. This custom, if it existed elsewhere, has been forgotten, but the phrase is universally known.

In Lumë, if a husband suspected his wife of illicit love-making, he could not tell her people because he was being disgraced. He could only lie in wait till he caught the pair together and then kill them. Sometimes when he could not catch them together, he divorced her; in one instance a man did so on the insistence of his kinsmen, who thought themselves as well as the husband disgraced by the wife's notoriously loose living. He admitted that he could not manage her, divorced her for the sake of the family honour, and then, being too poor to pay the bride-price of another wife, lived alone. Divorcing the wife also ensured that the husband ran no risk of having a feud with either her brother or her lover's family. The Highlanders held similar views—the husband could not question his wife or tell her lover not to come to the house; he could again do nothing but lie in wait until he caught them. A few Highlanders held that the husband might inform her people of her misconduct; if they believed him, they would say, 'Kill her', or perhaps kill her themselves; in either case her death went unavenged. They preferred to kill such a wife for they were Catholics in the main, and as such could not remarry if they divorced their wife. As it was permissible in Martanesh to kill the guilty pair separately, an adulterous wife was never divorced but always killed. If a woman was divorced in Mat, her brother always asked what wrong she had done; if she had been an adulteress, he killed her, provided that the husband first killed the lover. In north-east Albania, if the lover was the husband's brother, divorce was thought the easiest way out. Only an exceptionally brutal man would kill his brother; the average man would prefer to say to his wife, 'You have committed this sin, and are divorced'.

If the husband killed only his wife, her brother avenged her death in most cases; without seeing his sister dead by her lover's side he was unwilling to believe in her guilt and apt to think the husband

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APPENDIX

LAWS PASSED AT GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

(TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL ALBANIAN)

I. Some Laws Ratified by the Prefecture of Shkodër.

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, pp. 128–9.)

1. Bride-price is not to be altered. The amount fixed seven years ago remains in force. It is, therefore, 600 grosh, a sum which includes everything. Whoever acts contrary to this order will be fined 1000 grosh.

2. Girls will be betrothed by their father, or if they have no father by their brother and, failing him, by their nearest male cousin. Women are not to interfere in betrothals.

3. Every betrothal will be arranged openly not secretly, and there will be a go-between as witness. When the betrothal has been completed and rifles have been fired off in front of the betrothed girl's house, the men who have the right to betroth her will go to the parish priest in order to register the names of the betrothed pair, the registrar and the witnesses, together with all the circumstances. Whosoever does not abide by this decree will be fined 1000 grosh.

4. Whoever refuses to go through the marriage ceremony when the priest comes for that purpose will be fined 1000 grosh.

5. Whoever incites a married woman to run away will be fined eight purses.

6. Whoever gives a bride to a man who has divorced his lawfully wedded wife will be fined 1000 grosh.

7. Whoever shall dare to send away his lawfully wedded wife in order to take another woman in unlawful wedlock will be fined 1000 grosh.

8. Whoever sells his daughter or sister or other female of his blood relations will be fined, like the buyer, 1000 grosh.

9. On the basis of the ancient customs, which are still observed among the Christians of the mountains of Shkodër concerning betrothals, marriages, enticing of other men's wives, running away of wives and other similar causes of trouble, some laws have been enacted for the repression of the aforesaid evil acts and have been approved by His Lordship the Archbishop of Shkodër, Mgr Luigi Çurçi, and by the r. ountain chiefs. These laws after being weighed by the Government Council have been approved and ordered to be put into execution.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl
[Laws enacted in Kastrat and Bajzë on Nov. 1, 1892]

Whoever brings pigs or sheep to Shpellë will be fined 50 grosh. [681]
Whoever washes clothes at Shpellë will be fined 50 grosh.[1] [231]

21. A man who leaves his sureties to pay his debt is to pay a fine of [296] 225 grosh to his creditor and 150 grosh to the chiefs and 5 rams.

VI. Supplement dated 1894.

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, pp. 124–5.)

1. Whoever takes a woman to live with him without marrying her or [837] runs off with a married woman or a girl shall pay 1000 grosh to the Church, 500 grosh to the chiefs and 10 rams.

2. Whoever tears his face in mourning and lamentation for the dead, [765] shall pay 1000 grosh to the Church, 1000 grosh to the chiefs and 10 rams.

3. Whoever does not permit the chiefs and fine-collectors to carry [696] out a tribal law will be fined 500 grosh and 5 rams.

4. Whoever commits a murder during a truce or after the feud has [628] been compounded will be fined 6 purses and 10 rams.

5. Whoever fires a rifle in a house where there is a wedding shall, [585] whether he be a guest or the master of the house, pay 500 grosh and 5 rams.

The same fine shall be paid by whoever annoys another with abuse at table whether at a dinner or a wedding.

6. Whoever acts contrary to these laws, whether he be chief, fine- [554] collector, or commoner, shall pay 3000 grosh.

Brahim Beg *serxherde*
Kasem Beg *bylikbash*
Dodë Prençi bajraktar
Zenel Shebani
Gjokë Doda
Keq Prela
Zef Gjeka
Prelë Toma
Gjelosh Nika
Vukusa' Leka
Brahim Vuksani

[In front of each of these names there is a Turkish seal.]

VII. Solemn Pledge for Flock and Shepherd in Nikaj and Shalë, St Prende's Day 1894.

681 491 574

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, pp. 119–20.)

1. As regards roads it has been enacted as follows:
From the fountain in Faqe to the crucifix in Brazhdë the road is

[1] (Note by Father Gjeçov: Shpellë is the place where Bajzë and district take water.)

10· Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

X. Decisions Taken on April 30th, 1905, by the Youth of Shalë.

(From Father Gjeçov, *Kanùn*, pp. 126–7.)

1. As from to-day up to Ash Wednesday the percentage on loans at interest is to be paid with 25 okes of grain. If this is not paid by Ash Wednesday, a percentage of 30 okes is to be taken by force from the debtor.

As interest 100 grosh or 100 okes of grain as the creditor wishes are to be paid. Let him take 100 grosh if it suits him, or if he says, 'I'll have grain', let them give him 100 okes of grain.

2. Grain is never to be given to anybody by a man of Shalë unless it is wanted for a funeral meal or it is desired to make a present of not more than 20 okes.

3. Raki is never to be produced by a man of Shalë at a funeral meal except during the seven weeks of Lent.

4. No man of Shalë is ever to give away more than 100 grosh either outside or inside the tribe.

A godmother is not to present a red *xhamadam* (sleeveless jacket).

No woman is to go to a wedding in a party of five or more and they are not to seek a woman outside the same house.[1]

5. Whoever fires the first shot in the yard of a church or inside its boundaries is to have his house burned and must pay 20 purses under the guarantee of flock-cum-shepherd and the youth of Shalë.

6. If a man disturbs a mass that is being said and if the priest, crucifix in hand, says, 'So-and-so has troubled me', the offender will have his house burned and must pay a fine of 2 oxen to the tribe.

7. Whoever touches Church property must pay a fine of 2 oxen to the tribe.

8. Whoever molests the Church servant must pay a fine of 2 oxen to the tribe.

9. If anyone borrows coffee and sugar from the priest for a funeral meal and does not return them to him within four weeks, and if the priest complains, he must pay a fine of one ox to the tribe.

10. Whoever steals an ewe, goat and cow from a man of Shalë and whoever does anything to his neighbour that disgraces him, shall have his harvest burned, his fields plucked bare and his grain panniers smashed. He will pay fines of one ox to the youth and 2 rams to the government representative.

11. These laws, enacted by the youth of Shalë together with the

[1] The last clause of § 4 is given as in Mrs Hasluck's MS., but there seems to be some mistake, as the corresponding passage in the Italian version of Father Gjeçov's *Kanùn* runs:

Lo shalano non può fare il compare più di 5 volte, e non può chiedere che si leghino in comparto più di 5 famiglie.